



# PSC NEWS

## Missouri Public Service Commission

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### **PSC STAFF ISSUES REPORT ON RESTORATION EFFORTS FROM SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS ON AUGUST 13, 2005**

JEFFERSON CITY---The Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission has concluded that AmerenUE did respond in accordance with its emergency plan in response to severe thunderstorms that hit AmerenUE's service territory on August 13, 2005.

The PSC Staff report makes a number of recommendations for improvement. "AmerenUE can better educate and then communicate with city and county officials regarding the restoration of power. The special needs of skilled care nursing facilities need to be addressed," the PSC Staff report said. "Although mutual assistance agreements were not used in the 2005 storm, mutual assistance agreements need to be maintained and evaluated to determine the appropriate utilization of this resource. In addition, there is still work left to be done on the automated calling restoration algorithm in order to provide a realistic estimate of outage time to the customer," the report said.

Evaluating AmerenUE's response to the storm, the PSC Staff noted that AmerenUE has made improvements in the information communicated to those customers who require the use of electrically operated medical equipment. Improvements were made by AmerenUE in the wording that the Company uses in its call back system since the July 2004 storms. Staff's report also recognized that AmerenUE provided more information to the media on where work was focused and on the progress of the restoration of power. A new feature added to the AmerenUE website since the 2004 storms was an outage map.

The PSC Staff report recommends the Company continue its plan to eliminate the tree trimming backlog by 2008. Based upon a recommendation made by the PSC Staff after the July 2004 storms, AmerenUE started a process of reducing the tree trimming backlog. However at the time of the August 2005 storms, only seven and one-half months of the 48 month plan to reduce the backlog had been completed so the tree trimming backlog continues to exist.

AmerenUE Vegetation Management field personnel estimated that 80 to 85 percent of the tree damage from the August 2005 storms was from trees located off AmerenUE easements. "Even if AmerenUE totally eliminated the tree trimming backlog tomorrow, tree related outages would still occur with the storm conditions that occurred on August 13, 2005," the PSC Staff report said.

**Background:** A severe thunderstorm passed through the St. Louis area during the afternoon of August 13, 2005. This storm produced wind downbursts in excess of 75 miles per hour that were sustained for as long as five minutes. The combination of large trees and sustained winds resulted in extensive damage to AmerenUE's system and impacted electric service to approximately 217,000 of AmerenUE's Missouri customers.

The PSC Staff report can be viewed on the Public Service Commission website:

[www.psc.mo.gov](http://www.psc.mo.gov)